RV BUSINESS

FROM THE EDITORS OF TL ENTERPRISES

FEBRUARY 1984 $2.00

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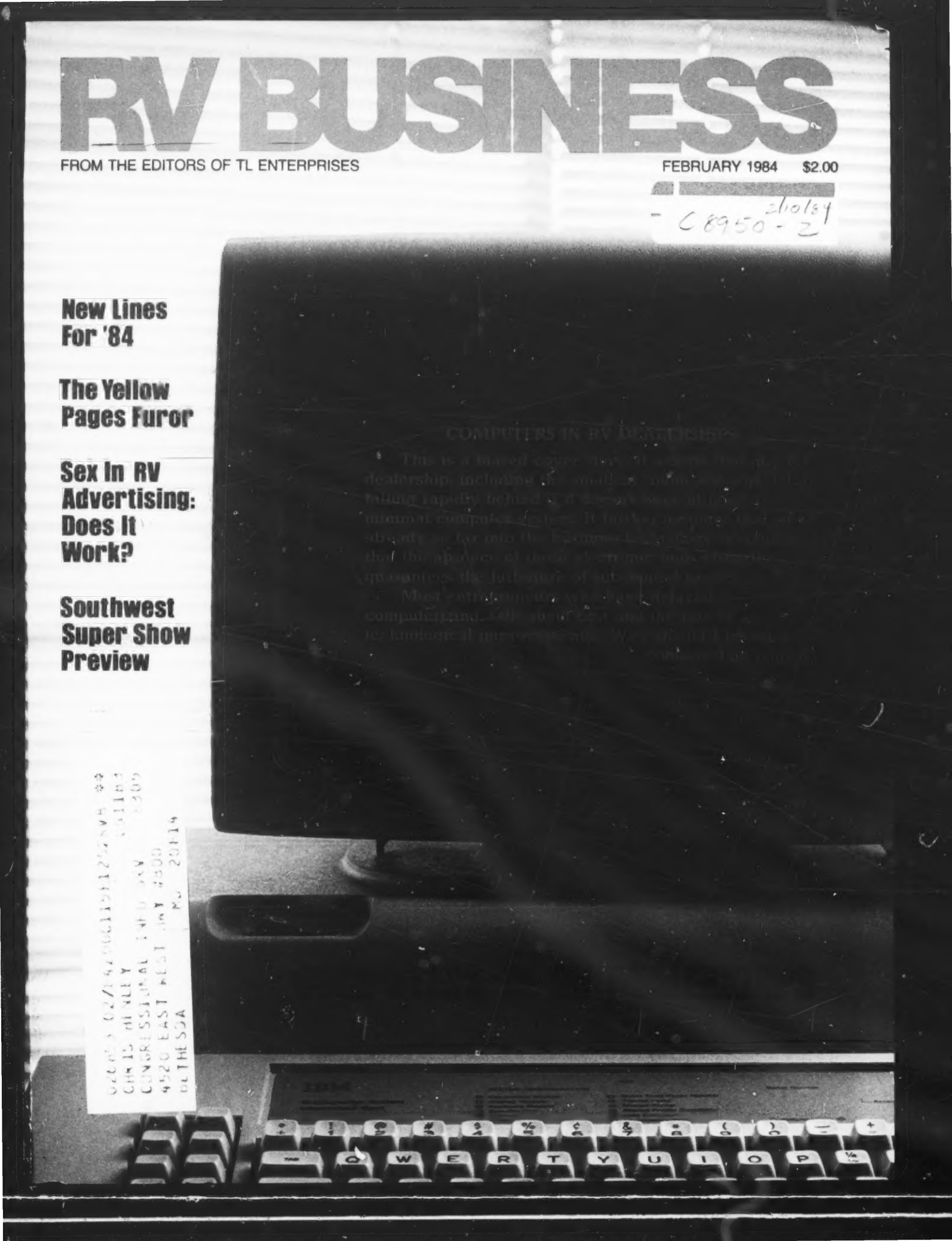
New Lines For '84

The Yellow Pages Furor

Sex In RV Advertising: Does It Work?

Southwest Super Show Preview



RV BUSINESS

A TL ENTERPRISES PUBLICATION

FEBRUARY 1984/VOL. 34, NO. 11

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ON THE COVER: What better way to demonstrate the versatility of the computer than to begin our cover story on that very piece of machinery on which it was originally conceived? As for what that versatility can mean to your business, see Part I of our computer story. It begins on the cover and carries over onto page 41. Photo by Hal Hunt.

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RV BUSINESS is published by TL Enterprises, Incorporated, with editorial and business offices at 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura, California 91301; (213) 991-4980.

RV BUSINESS is published monthly; a Directory and Buyer's Guide appear annually. Subscription rates: U.S. and Canada, $24 a year; $48 for two years. Foreign subs, $48 per year. Single copies are $2 for regular issues and $9.95 for the Directory. Advertising rates on request.

Record all changes of address in writing with Circulation Department at least 50 days before date of issue in which they are to take effect. Address all correspondence and editorial material to Agoura, California, office.

RV BUSINESS is published by TL Enterprises, Incorporated, which also publishes *Trailer Life*, *MotorHome*, *Rider*, *Trailer Life's Annual RV Buyer's Guide*, and *Hi-Way Herald* for the Good Sam RV Owners' Club.

PERSPECTIVE

An analysis of RVB's monthly survey of its Dealer Advisory Board Members

GAYLORD MAXWELL

November ended strongly on the up-side for RV retailers, compared to the corresponding month in 1982. In both dollars and units, dealers are definitely on a roll.

Although the sales volume was a couple of points behind the year-to-date rate, units picked up handsomely. Apparently, smaller units were more popular for the month—small motorhomes, travel trailers and fifth-wheels that is—because camping trailers and truck campers did not account for big numbers.

SALES VOLUME		
For Month	This year $ 7,046,263	+46%
	Last year $ 4,879,581	
Year to Date	This year $80,888,521	+48%
	Last year $54,529,843	

TOTAL UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 368	+32%
	Last year 279	
Year to Date	This year 6417	+24%
	Last year 5179	

NEW UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 233	+42%
	Last year 163	
Year to Date	This year 4125	+31%
	Last year 3146	

USED UNIT SALES		
For Month	This year 135	+16%
	Last year 116	
Year to Date	This year 2292	+13%
	Last year 2033	

MOTORHOMES

The 74% increase in sales for the year-to-date makes this RV type by far the front runner in terms of percentage of increase. An interesting change during the year has been the renewed interest in Class C's. The big ones are still moving well, though. Profits are still ranked reasonably good, but not as good as earlier this season. The demand for older motorhomes—units that can be sold in the $8000 to $10,000 range—is enormous. Rigs that should be bringing several thousand dollars less sell like hotcakes.

NEW	For Month	This year 98	+51%
		Last year 65	
	Year to Date	This year 1121	+74%
		Last year 645	
USED	For Month	This year 64	+25%
		Last year 51	
	Year to Date	This year 806	+13%
		Last year 712	

TRUCK CAMPERS

The percentage increase for the month is staggering, but the unit numbers aren't as impressive. What actually happened was that our Dealer Advisory Board member, who displays big at Dodger, had a boom public show; still, the 39% increase for the year is tied with fifth-wheels for second place among all RV types. Used sales picked up almost equally well. Profits were rated excellent.

NEW	For Month	This year 15	+225%
		Last year 4	
	Year to Date	This year 164	+ 39%
		Last year 118	
USED	For Month	This year 18	+200%
		Last year 6	
	Year to Date	This year 191	+24%
		Last year 154	

CAMPING TRAILERS

This is the only down category for the month. Apparently, there has been too much cold weather for people to Think Outdoors. Another factor is that dealers had been cleaning up their inventories very strongly in the preceding two months. Used units have not been popular on dealers' lots. The fact is that most motorhome dealers and many travel trailer specialists won't take them in trade; consequently, many are sold privately.

NEW	For Month	This year 32	– 9%
		Last year 35	
	Year to Date	This year 1485	+16%
		Last year 1282	
USED	For Month	This year 3	–70%
		Last year 10	
	Year to Date	This year 290	–22%
		Last year 355	

TRAVEL TRAILERS

The demand for used units fell from the average for the month, but it was still a plus figure. Some dealers are reporting that the excellent prices they had been getting for clean used units have dropped some.

NEW	For Month	This year 50	+25%
		Last year 40	
	Year to Date	This year 1044	+19%
		Last year 878	
USED	For Month	This year 48	+ 7%
		Last year 45	
	Year to Date	This year 912	+23%
		Last year 741	

FIFTH-WHEELS

As with truck campers, much of the 100% increase in new unit sales was due to a terrific Dodger Show, which boosted the monthly figures to a new high for the DAB. Used units are very popular with retirees who want to upgrade. Δ

NEW	For Month	This year 38	+100%
		Last year 19	
	Year to Date	This year 311	+ 39%
		Last year 223	
USED	For Month	This year 2	– 50%
		Last year 4	
	Year to Date	This year 93	+ 31%
		Last year 71	

SHIPMENTS

RVIA, NOVEMBER

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during November 1983 was 26,000 units, up 32% from November of 1982.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in Nov. 1983		Nov. 1982	Percent Change	Cumulative 1983	Cumulative 1982	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	4000	3200	+25.0%	68,100	50,500	+34.9%
FIFTH-WHEELS	1500	800	+87.5%	17,000	10,900	+56.0%
TRUCK CAMPERS	300	400	−25.0%	6600	5400	+22.2%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	12,000	9700	+23.7%	141,900	102,400	+38.6%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	2900	1600	+81.3%	30,800	17,900	+72.1%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	500	300	+66.7%	5100	3700	+37.8%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	2300	1200	+91.7%	28,600	16,800	+70.2%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	2500	2500	–0–	35,100	32,100	+ 9.3%
TOTALS	26,000	19,700	+32.0%	333,200	239,700	+39.0%